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ABSTRACT

This paper reported on a study made by the North Carolina Department of Public instruction in which outstanding teachers evaluated themselves on a variety of personal traits. Participants in the program were 43 recipients of outstanding biology teaching awards from the National Association of Biology Teachers. The teachers were asked to self-administer the Gough Adjective Checklist, a collection of 300 adjectives which could be applied as descriptions of one's self. As a result of research studies using the checklist, the test authors had developed 24 separate scales containing groups of related objectives. The scale purported to measure such personality traits as self confidence, personal adjustment, self control and dominance. Teacher responses on eleven scales were high enough to satisfy chi-square levels of significance of .01. In order of decreasing values, these were/ achievement, endurance, order, intraception, dominance, nurturance, defensiveness, personal adjustment, favorable, self confidence, and self control. (Author/CP)

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# HOW OUTSTANDING TEACHERS VIEW THEMSELVES AS PERSONS

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As an outgrowth of a study of biology teacher evaluation[1] utilizing data from the Outstanding Biology Teacher Award (OBTA) Program of the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT), a number of interesting insights were gained about the self-image of those selected to receive the award.

Because it is accepted that how one perceives himself as a person directly affects his relationships with others and thus his success and effectiveness as a teacher, award winners were asked to respond to the items contained in the Gough Adjective Checklist (ACL).[2]

Developed in 1952 by Harrison G. Gough of the University of California Institute of Development and Research and subsequently improved by Alfred Heilbrun, the ACL lists 300 adjectives which can be applied as descriptions of one's self. Although designed to aid in collecting observations about the personalities of others, the test has been found suitable for a variety of self-assessment purposes. Specifically in this instance, the ACL provided commonly used descriptive words in a systematic and standardized format which could be self-administered with respondents being asked to check those which they felt applied to themselves.

As a result of research studies using the checklist, the test authors have developed twenty-four separate scales containing groups of related adjectives, established by both empirical and theoretical definition. The scales purport to measure such personality traits as self-condifence, personal

adjustment, self-control, heterosexuality, dominance, endurance, and aggression.[3] Forty-three out of forty-six award recipients returned completed checklist forms.

How did this group of teachers, considered to be outstanding by the NABT, view themselves as persons? Could they be characterized? Responses of the group of twenty-nine male and fourteen female teachers revealed the following:

- There were no significant differences noted between the responses of men and women biology teachers. (Because there were no differences, combined responses were utilized in the study.)
- Responses on eleven scales were high enough to satisfy chi-square levels of significance of .01. (Table 1)
- Responses on one scale (Succorance) were low enough to satisfy chi-square levels of significance of .01. (Table 1)

Specifically, in what ways did the study group perceive themselves as persons? How can their responses be interpreted for each of these twelve scales?

As indicated by published ACL scale descriptions,[4] these persons could be considered exceptional in:

- Achievement: Def. - to strive to be outstanding in pursuits of socially recognized significance.

  High scorers on this scale are usually seen as intelligent, hardworking, and involved in intellectual endeavors. They are determined to do well and usually succeed. Although motivation is

internal and goal-centered rather than competitive, they may be unduly trusting and optimistic.

. Endurance: Def. - to persist in any task undertaken.

High scorers are typically self-controlled and responsible, idealistic and concerned for truth and justice. Although perhaps conventional, they may support unconventional ideas and unpopular causes.

. Order: Def. - to place special emphasis on neatness, organization, and planning one's activities.

Those who score high on this scale are usually sincere and dependable, although sometimes at the cost of individuality and spontaneity.

. Intraception: Def. - to attempt to understand one's own behavior or the behavior of others.

Persons high on this scale are reflective, serious, capable, conscientious and knowledgeable. Their intellectual talents are excellent and they derive pleasure from their exercise.

. Dominance: Def. - to seek and sustain leadership roles in groups, or to be influential and controlling in individual relationships.

High scorers here are forceful, strong willed, perservering and are confident of their ability to do what they wish. They are direct and forthright in their behavior.

. Nurturance: Def. - to engage in behaviors which extend material or emotional benefits to others.

Although persons high on this scale are helpful and nurturant to others, they also tend to be too bland and self-disciplined.

Their dependability and benevolence are worthy qualities, but they may nonetheless be too conventional and solicitous of the other person.

. Defensiveness: Def. - this scale relates to the tendency of subjects to respond in terms of social implications which might be suspected.

The high scoring person on this scale is apt to be self-controlled and resolute in both attitude and behavior, insistent and even stubborn in seeking objectives.

. Personal Adjustment: Def. - this scale seems to depict a positive attitude toward life, more than absence of problems and worries. The attitudinal set is one of optimism, cheerfulness, interest in others and a readiness to adapt.

Those high on this scale are seen as dependable, peaceable, trusting, friendly, practical, loyal, and wholesome. They fit in well, ask for little, treat others with courtesy, and work well toward their own goals.

. Favorable: Def. - want to appear favorably.

Persons high on this scale appear to be motivated by a strong desire to do well and to impress others but always by virtue of hard work and conventional behavior.

. Self-Confidence: Def. - poise and self-assurance, stressing a sense of dominance.

High scores on this scale are indicative of a person who is assertive, affiliative, outgoing, persistent, and an actionist. He wants to get things done, is impatient with people or things

standing in his way, but is concerned with creating a good impression. Others see him as forceful, self-confident, ambitious, and opportunistic.

Self-Control: Def. - responsible, sociable, conscientious, dependable.

High scorers on this scale tend to be serious, sober individuals interested in and responsible to their obligations. They are seen as diligent, practical, and loyal workers but may evidence over-control, with much emphasis on the proper means of attaining the ends of social living.

Succorance: Def. - to solicit sympathy, affection, or emotional support from others.

The low scorer on this scale is independent, resourceful, and self-sufficient but at the same time is both prudent and circumspect, demonstrating a sort of quiet confidence in his own worth and ability.

Compared with the larger norm population on which the test was standardized, data for responses to each of the ACL scales for the study group were reported as T-scores having a mean of 50 and a standard deviation (Sigma) of 10. Thus, according to standard distribution expectations, a given percent (15.77%) of the scores should fall above and a similar percent should fall below 1 standard deviation.

Chi-square analyses were computed for each scale to determine the significance between what was expected and what was observed using the following formula:

$$x^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

$O_i$ = Observed responses found in the i th category

$E_i$ = The number of responses expected in the i th category

$\sum_{i=1}^{k}$ = Summation over all (k) categories.[5]

If the difference between the responses expected and the responses actually observed was small, the value of $x^2$ was also small. If the difference was great, $x^2$ was large. Thus, the larger $x^2$ is, the more likely it is that the observed frequencies are likely due to factors other than chance. For purposes of the study, the .01 level was accepted as significant.

Although the study did not attempt to discover differences between the self-image of teachers considered to be outstanding and those who were not, it does indicate the significant ways in which one group <u>did</u> perceive themselves and it does suggest some ways that various groups could be compared. It would be interesting to compare these results with similar studies of outstanding teachers of other subjects or with teachers considered to be less than outstanding.

1
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2
Gough, Harrison G. THE ADJECTIVE CHECKLIST. Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, California, 1952.

3
Gough, Harrison G. and Alfred Heilbrun. THE ADJECTIVE CHECKLIST MANUAL. Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, California, Passim pp. 5-9.

4
Loc.cit.

5
Siegal, G. Sidney. NON-PARAMETRIC STATISTICS FOR THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956, p. 43.

TABLE 1

CHI-SQUARE LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR RESPONSES

TO SCALES OF THE ADJECTIVE CHECKLIST BY OUTSTANDING BIOLOGY TEACHERS

| Scale | % Below 1 Sigma | % Above 1 Sigma | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Achievement | 0.00 | 51.16 | .01 |
| Endurance | 0.00 | 44.18 | .01 |
| Order | 4.65 | 46.51 | .01 |
| Intraception | 4.65 | 37.20 | .01 |
| Dominance | 4.65 | 34.88 | .01 |
| Nurturance | 4.65 | 34.88 | .01 |
| Defensiveness | 0.00 | 30.23 | .01 |
| Personal Adjustment | 0.00 | 23.25 | .01 |
| Favorable | 4.65 | 27.90 | .01 |
| Self-Confidence | 6.97 | 27.90 | .01 |
| Self-Control | 4.65 | 25.38 | .01 |
| Succorance | 23.25 | 0.00 | .01 (low) |